



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, California 91360-4207

In reply refer to:
L76 (SAMO/106-75)

September 3, 2008

Michelle Glueckert, Case Planner
Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#1740
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Ms. Glueckert:

The National Park Service has received the Notice of Proposed Project within the Santa Monica Mountains for Project No. LU08-0088, proposed on Assessor Parcel Number 700-0-150-195, a 10.31-acre parcel located on Cotharin Road, south of Clark's Peak. The applicant proposes to construct a 21,199 square-foot, two-story, single family dwelling. Ancillary structures include an attached garage, a second dwelling unit, and four accessory structures (art studio, storage, art storage, and pool house. Grading of 9,600 cubic yards cut and 2,100 cubic yards fill would be balanced on site.

The National Park Service appreciates the opportunity to participate in the public review process for projects in Ventura County. We provide comments on the effects of private and public land development in the Santa Monica Mountains at the invitation of state and local units of government with authority to prevent or minimize adverse uses. We respect the rights of land owners to develop their properties consistent with federal, state, and local laws. In providing comments, we assume a neutral position and do not support or oppose land development. To this end, we offer the following comments on the proposed single family residence. The Notice of Proposed Project requests answers to the following two questions.

1. Is the subject property suitable for public recreational use?

Yes, the site is within the viewshed of public roads and potentially within view of points along the public road and trail network in the western portion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). The proposed residence would be situated at the southerly end of the crest of the Clark's Peak ridgeline. Clark's Peak is the highest point between Sandstone Peak and the Pacific Ocean. The property is within one quarter mile of the National Park Service's (NPS's) Deer Creek property, and within 1.5 miles of the NPS's Yellow Hill property and Leo Carrillo State Park. The residence would be visible from points along Deer Creek Road and Pacific View Road. The residence would also be visible from

points along the proposed route of the long-envisioned Coastal Slope Trail and from existing public trails on the Yellow Hill parkland and Leo Carrillo State Park. The project, as proposed, has the potential to cause significant adverse effects to visual resources, caused by landform grading, the sizable future residence and ancillary structures, and fuel modification. We are concerned the size of the proposed residence and structures, totaling 33,065 square feet, may potentially silhouette ridgelines and ocean views and may be out of scale with the surrounding community situated within the national recreation area.

While no trails or public facilities are proposed for the site, per se, visitors to the SMMNRA enjoy scenic views on car trips over scenic routes in the mountains and from recreational trails. The quality of scenic views is critical to maximizing the visitor's enjoyment. Ventura County's Local Coastal Program (LCP) contains policies that prioritize scenic views and protect existing parkland. We encourage the County to implement the LCP to the fullest extent possible, including usage of the LCP's suggestions for "additional landscaping, use of natural materials, low building profile, earth tone colors, and the like" (Pg. 101).

2. *Is your agency planning to acquire the property, or any portion of the property that would be affected by the proposed development, and will you have the funding for such purchase within the next calendar year?*

No. The 1984 Land Protection Plan for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area designates the subject property as a "Cooperative Planning Area." The "Cooperative" designation means the land would not be purchased for public parkland, but development should be compatible with the surrounding parkland setting. The establishing legislation for the national recreation area states the "State of California and its local units of government have authority to prevent or minimize adverse uses of the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent coastline area and can, to a great extent, protect the health, safety, and general welfare by the use of such authority" (P.L. 95-625, Section 507(a)(3)). In the absence of funding to acquire an interest in the subject property, we depend on the cooperation of the County, through its LCP, and the private landowner, to protect the site's scenic and natural resources.

Other consideration: Natural Resource Value of Property

The subject property hosts native vegetation habitat designated as the *Ceanothus megacarpus-Malosma laurina* Association in the southeast and northeast portions of the property. Additionally, the park's studies of radio-collared lions in the Santa Monica Mountains have charted movement in the Deer Creek parkland and vicinity. The combined intact native habitat on most of the site and documentation of large mammal movement indicate the subject property is serving its natural resource function as a viable habitat linkage. We recommend the property be reviewed for environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) designation and the proposed project adjusted according to meet policies protective of ESHA..

The general vicinity of Deer Creek Road, Cotharin Road, and Yerba Buena Road has experienced increasing habitat fragmentation owing to single family residential development

with fuel modification in excess of the required 100-foot buffer. We request the project be designed to reduce the need for fuel modification by clustering the proposed structures and minimizing the development footprint.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions, please call Melanie Beck at (805)370-2346.

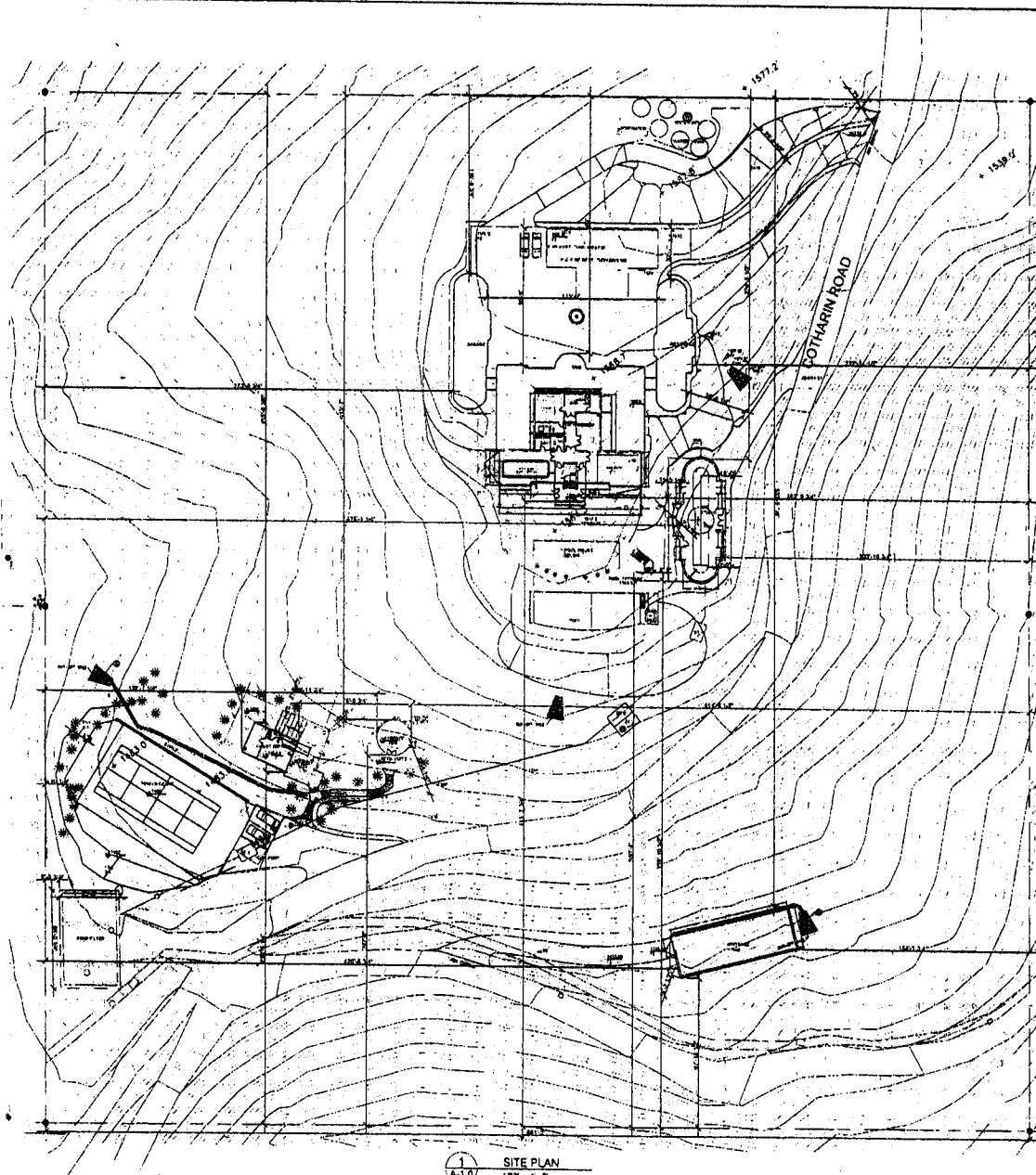
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Woody Smeck".

Woody Smeck
Superintendent

cc: Honorable Linda Parks, Ventura County Supervisor, Second District
Joe Edmiston, Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Ron Schafer, Superintendent, Angeles District, State Department of Parks and Recreation

SMMC
Attachment
9/22/08
Item 11(a)



1
A-1.0
SITE PLAN
1/2" = 1' 0"

SIDERMAN'S RESIDENCE
COTHARIN ROAD
MALIBU - CALIFORNIA - 90265

ADDRESS
4813 VIA BENSA
OAK PARK - CA
91377
PH: (818) 882-7716
FAX: (818) 882-8221

UPDATE: JUN-4-06
UPDATE: JUL-16-08

UPDATE: NOV-7-07
UPDATE: JAN-20-08
UPDATE: FEB-18-08
UPDATE: FEB-21-08
UPDATE: FEB-27-08
UPDATE: MAR-10-08
UPDATE: MAR-16-08

SCALE
1"=30'

SHEET
A-1.0
SITE PLAN